

# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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## LETTER A.

TO A CORRESPONDENT IN AMERICA,  
ON THE EXPENCES, THE TAXES, &c. OF  
GREAT BRITAIN, COMPARED WITH  
THOSE OF AMERICA.

Botley, England, Nov. 15, 1814.

DEAR SIR,—Your request would, long ago, have been attended to, if I had had more leisure for the task. For your valuable information, relative to your agriculture, your flocks, and your manufactures, I am much obliged to you; and, if the two countries were at peace, you should receive from me all the useful information, which it is in my power to give you upon several heads, which I shall not touch upon in a letter passing through the press, but which, I hope, the restoration of harmony between our two countries, may, in a year or two, at most, make it convenient for me to communicate to you through the ordinary channel of the post.

You wish to know what is the amount of the annual expences of our Government; what is the amount of the taxes paid to the Government; what is the amount of our *poor rates*; what is the amount of our *tythes*; and you wish me to shew the comparison between these and the expences and taxes in America. You also wish to have my account of the state of the people here; or, in plainer terms, you wish to know, how we stand as to *mode of living*, and as to *crimes and punishments*, compared with the people of your Republic.

To perform this task as it ought to be performed, is, I am afraid, beyond my power. I do, indeed, know more about these matters than many of my neighbours; but I cannot hope to discharge the task to your satisfaction, who are so accurate in all your statements and calculations, and who, with all your indulgence in other respects, are not to be satisfied, unless you find others as accurate as yourself. Nevertheless, I will do all that I am able to do in return for the very valuable information, which I owe solely to your attentive kindness, and which serves me as a guide

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through those numerous errors, with regard to your country, into which I see others of my countrymen continually falling.

I am happy, that you have not called upon me for *opinions*; that you have not called upon me for *conclusions*, drawn from premises that I am to state; that you confine your request to an account of *mere facts*; that you have not wished to expose me to the mortification of seeing the effort of my facts destroyed, or perverted, by the superior talents of those, who might, with merciless hands, lay foul of my feeble attempts at an application of these facts to the sustaining of any political theory. It is, I perfectly agree with you, the best and fairest way, in such a case, to content myself with bare facts, leaving the reader, whether public or private, to draw his own conclusions; because the points of controversy, if any arise, can be at once decided; and, because that reader, who is not competent to draw just conclusions from facts clearly stated, is not worth the attention of the writer, and is of little more consequence in society than a worm or a fly.

In speaking of the EXPENCES of our Government, I must confine myself to the *annual expences*, and, in this case, to the last year's expences; that is to say, the year which ended on the 5th January, 1814. As, in the comparative part of my statement, I must speak of *dollars* on your side and of *pounds sterling* on our side, I will, for the sake of easier assimilation, take the dollar at *five shillings*, instead of *four shillings and sixpence*, which is its real sterling value. But the state of our paper currency will fully justify this advance; and, indeed, it would justify a further advance. This, however, is not material enough to induce us to enter into any laboured calculations on the subject; especially as it is contended here, by a great majority of the Government financiers, that our paper has undergone no depreciation at all.

To begin, then, with the expences of our Government, in *Great Britain* only, for



the year ending on the 5th of January, 1814, the total sum expended was 113,968,610*l.* 16*s.* 10*d.* I speak from documents, laid before the House of Commons, and therefore, I run no risk of error or of contradiction. This was the total sum, exclusive of the expenditure belonging to Ireland. To go into a detail as to the several particulars would fill five or six Numbers of my REGISTER; but the great heads of the expenditure it may be worth your while to know. These were as follow:—

Charge on account of the National Debt for the Year.....	} £41,897,375 17 5½
Civil List.....	1,028,000 0 0
Courts of Justice, Mint, Salaries & Allowances, Bounties.....	} 234,937 19 7½
Allowance to Members of the Royal Family, Pensions, &c.....	} 332,412 7 4½
Civil List of Scotland....	113,176 4 8½
Other Bounties and Pensions, and Militia and Deserters' Warrants...	} 391,056 1 11½
Navy.....	21,996,624 9 4½
Ordnance.....	3,404,527 11 11
Army.....	29,469,520 10 3
Remittances to other Countries, Hanover, Austria, Prussia, and nine other Powers....	} 15,994,832 14 1
Miscellaneous Services at Home and Abroad }	4,010,349 18 4½
	£118,872,813 15 1½
Deduct Sums for Ireland, &c.....	} 4,904,202 18 3
Total Expenditure of Great Britain.....	£113,968,610 16 10½

Now, as to the comparison between the expenditure of this Government and of yours, I must speak of the latest period of which I have any knowledge of your expenditure; and though you are in a state of war and of unprecedented expence, you must bear in mind that we are in a state of war also. I find an account of your expenditure in Mr. Madison's Speech of the 20th of September, 1814, which Speech, by the bye, many persons here think will be his *last*, except that which the *Times* newspaper supposes he will make at his exit from the world.—Mr. Madison speaks thus on the subject of your finances:—"The monies received into the Treasury, during the nine months ending the 13th of June last, amounted to 32 millions of dollars, of which 11 millions were the proceeds of the public revenue, and the remainder derived from loans. The disbursements for Public Expenditure during the same period exceed 34

"millions of dollars, and left in the Treasury on the 1st of July near five millions of dollars."

Taking your expenditure without fractions, then, it would be for the last year, 47,550,000 dollars, while ours was 455,874,443 dollars. So that our expenditure, exclusive of poor-rates, tythes, and county and corporation government, is more than nine times as great as yours. The population of the two countries, leaving out our paupers, is, as I shall shew, by and bye, nearly equal, the greater population being, however, I believe, on your side. The paupers must be left out, as you will perceive, because it is impossible that they can contribute, in any way whatever, towards the means of meeting this expenditure.

But expenditure is of little importance when compared to receipts, or taxes. Here it is that we touch closely upon men's pockets. The means of expending consists, in part, of loans. These loans may, or may not, ever be paid off. You may, perhaps, pay them off by lands; we may pay them off by some yet unknown means. What we have to look at, in the most attentive manner, therefore, is, the amount of the TAXES; because this is what the people really pay.

The amount of our taxes, paid into the Treasury, during the last year, was 74,027,583*l.* 17*s.* 8*d.* We are very precise in the keeping of our accounts. According to Mr. Madison's statement, in his Speech, the money paid into your Treasury, during the last year, was 14,550,000 dollars.—In dollars our Taxes amounted to 296,110,335; which is rather more than twenty times the amount of your year's taxes. But you must bear in mind, that there is a considerable difference between the amount collected, and the amount paid into our Treasury. Amongst other deductions from this latter sum there was the sum of 3,504,938*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* deducted from the gross receipt, or collection, for the purpose of paying the "charges of management;" that is to say, for the purpose of paying the persons employed in the assessing, the supervising, the surveying, the inspecting, the collecting, the receiving, the transmitting, &c. of money paid into the Treasury. Now, 3,504,938*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.* is 14,019,754 dollars. So that the bare expence of the getting together of our taxes amounts, you see, to very nearly as much as the whole of the taxes





raised upon you; that is to say, if Mr. Madison's statement be correct. And suppose each of these persons, one with the other, to receive 50*l.* or 200 dollars, a year, here are wages for 70,098 men, constantly employed in the business of the taxes, while, supposing you to pay your tax-gatherers at the same rate, you have only 3,504 persons constantly employed in this way.

The POOR-RATES form another item of English taxation, in addition to the above; and a very important item it is now become. If you do not know the nature of this tax and of its application, it may be necessary to state, that this is a tax levied upon all householders and landholders, for the support of such persons as are too poor to support themselves. It is assessed and collected by persons, appointed by the taxed people, in every parish, called *Overseers of the Poor*; but, before they can proceed to collect any rate, they must have the approbation of a Justice of the Peace, who is, as they all are, appointed by the Crown. In the distribution of this money, the Overseers are again liable to the controul of the Justices of the Peace; for they may, upon the application of any pauper, order, without appeal, the Overseers to relieve the said pauper, in any manner that they please. This, therefore, is a tax, not paid into the Treasury, but disposable under the jurisdiction, and at the discretion of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace.—The office of Overseer is performed without any pay. It is a duty, or service, which every taxed householder is liable to be compelled to execute.

Now, then, as to the amount of this tax, which, you will observe, forms an addition to that of the Taxes already noticed, it was, in the year 1803, when the Report was laid before Parliament, 5,348,205*l.* For the last year I have only computation to guide me; but, that assures me, that the nation paid in poor-rates, last year, 7,896,556*l.*; or 31,586,224 dollars, being more than twice the amount of all the taxes which you paid during the last year, if Mr. MADISON's statement be correct. But that I may not expose myself to the risk of being charged with a wrong computation, I must first state, that no official account of this important matter has been laid before Parliament, since 1803; and that, therefore, I am forced to resort to computation, the grounds of which I will now explicitly state. I have the means of

coming at the exact amount of the poor-rates in Bishop's Waltham parish, where my farm lies, for the last year. This is a parish subject to no fluctuation of prosperity; it has no manufactories in it; it has a small country town and a large track of arable, meadow, wood, and waste land. Therefore, I may very fairly take the increase of the poor-rates here as a criterion of the increase of the poor-rates of the whole country, especially, if we find, from the official reports, that the poor-rates of this parish had, for nearly thirty years, up to 1803, kept a very nearly exact pace with the poor-rates of the whole nation. There were three different periods, at which the report of 1803 took the poor rates of the whole nation, and also the poor-rates of Bishop's Waltham parish; and the statement was as follows, observing, however, that, as to poor-rates, we speak of only *England and Wales*, Scotland not being under the poor laws.

<i>England and Wales.</i>	<i>Bishop's Waltham.</i>
In the Year	In the Year
1776— <i>L.</i> 1,720,316	1776— <i>L.</i> 581
1784— 2,167,749	1784— 670
1803— 5,348,205	1803—1,595

It is quite surprising to observe how exact are these proportions; how regularly this parish kept pace, for twenty-seven years, with the whole nation in the increase of its poor-rates. But, in order to leave no room for cavil on this head, the subject being one of the utmost importance, we will see what proportion this parish, according to its population, had of paupers in 1803, there being no account of the nation's number of paupers previous to 1803, and there being no likelihood that we shall ever see another.

<i>England and Wales.</i>	<i>Bishop's Waltham.</i>
Population, 8,872,980	Population, 1,773
Paupers, 1,256,357	Paupers, 236
Exclusive of persons	
in Alms-houses.	

Now, if you multiply the paupers by seven in both instances, you will find that they amount to nearly the whole of the population, making it appear, that in 1803, there were nearly one pauper to every seven persons in the parish of Bishop's Waltham, as well as throughout England and Wales. It was said, in our newspapers, that the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia expressed their surprise at seeing NO POOR PEOPLE in England. If this was true, it is clear, that their Majesty's



did not look in the *right places*. We now come to the result. The poor-rates in Bishop's Waltham parish, instead of the 1,595*l.* to which they amounted in 1803, amounted, *last year*, to 2,355*l.* 18*s.* 6½*d.* as I know from the poor book now lying before me, and of which sum I *myself* paid more than 100*l.* or 400 dollars. If, therefore, this criterion be a good one, and such, I think, it cannot be denied to be; if, in 1803, Bishop's Waltham paid 1,595*l.* while England and Wales paid 5,348,205*l.* England and Wales must, *last year*, have paid 7,896,556*l.* seeing that Bishop's Waltham paid, in the same year, 2,355*l.* throwing aside the shillings, pence, and farthings.

I return, then, to my former statement, that the poor-rates alone of England and Wales, exclusive of Scotland, where, however, there is something paid in support of the poor, amounts to more than double the sum, which was last year (a year of great expense,) paid by the whole of the population of America into the Treasury, in taxes of all sorts, direct and indirect.

Then comes another question; namely, what is the relative population of the two countries? I have not the account of your last *Census* at hand. I think it made your total population amount to between seven and eight millions. At *this time* I cannot suppose it to be less than 8,000,000. Take, then, the 5,348,205*l.* of poor-rates in 1803, observing that then there were 1,256,357 paupers, and you will find, that we must have now upwards of 1,800,000 paupers, provisions being, at this time, as cheap, if not cheaper, than they were in 1803.—Deduct, therefore, from the 8,872,980 (the population of England and Wales), the 1,800,000 paupers, and there are left, to *pay* the 7,896,556*l.* of poor-rates, only 7,072,980 persons, including women and children. The *paying* population, as to poor-rates, is, at any rate, smaller than the population of your Republic; and the sum paid exceeds, as I have before stated, *twice* the amount of the *whole of the taxes of every sort*, which you paid, last year, into the Treasury of the United States, if Mr. Madison's statement be correct.

Turning towards another view of this interesting subject, we perceive, that, if we exclude the paupers, as we rationally must, the poor rates alone amount to more than *one pound sterling*, or *four dollars*, a head of the whole of the population of England

and Wales. Our poor-rates alone amount to this on the whole of our population; while, according to Mr. Madison's account, the whole of your taxes of every sort, paid into the Treasury of the United States, do not amount to more than 2 dollars a head on your population, even supposing your population to be now little more than 7,000,000.

The TYTHES form another part of our taxes. I do not mean to speak of them, as some most *loyal* men do, as being peculiarly odious; or, indeed, as being odious at all, either in their nature, or the mode of their collection, in which latter I have never experienced any thing severe or vexatious; nor do I believe, that, as far as the clergy are the owners of the tythes (for they do not own more than about the half of them), their rate, or collection, is often severe, or unfair, or even troublesome. Still, however, the tythes, which Arthur Young, in 1792, estimated at 5,000,000*l.* in England and Wales, must be looked upon as so much money raised from the land; and, certainly, it would not be raised, if there were no Established Church; no State Religion. In short, the tythes, as far as the clergy are the receivers, must be looked upon as so much money received and expended by the Government; so much money given by the Government to a description of persons, eminently calculated to repay it in support. Nevertheless I will not include the *tythes* amongst the *taxes* of the nation. Lord Sheffield, indeed; he who predicted, in his book, published in 1783, that you would soon wish to return to your *allegiance*, which, as he made it out, would be found necessary to your very existence as a people; that same Lord Sheffield, in a speech to a meeting of wool-growers, lately reckoned *tythes* amongst the causes of our farmers being unable to maintain a competition with those of *neighbouring countries*. I do not give so much weight to tythes; but, still, they must not be forgotten; and when a Report to the House of Commons, made in 1803, states the *whole rental* of the kingdom of Great Britain at 28 millions, you will perceive, that if we take the tythes at Mr. Arthur Young's estimate of 1792, the tythes amount to more than a *sixth* of the whole rental. Indeed, they must amount to a great deal more; because the tythe consists of a tenth of the *whole of the produce of a farm*; and, of course, it is a tenth of the rent, the labour, the taxes,



the capital, the manure, and all other out-goings, and of the profits into the bargain. So that the tythe of the *produce* cannot, I should suppose, be less than a *fourth* of the rental; and, of course, that they amount to about 7,000,000*l.* in England and Wales, at this time; Scotland paying no tythes. But, then, it must be observed, that the *Church* does not receive more than the half of this sum. The rest is the property of lay persons. It is, in fact, private property, and is sold, or rented, as other private property is. Upon the subject of tythes, therefore, I shall not enter into any comparison between your country and ours. All the world knows, that you have *no tythes* and no compulsory payments on account of religion of any description; all the world knows, that the Episcopalians, the Quakers, the Catholics, the Presbyterians, the Baptists, the Lutherans, the Calvinists, the Methodists, the Menonists, the Moravians, the Dunkards, the Swenckfelders, the Seceders, the Unitarians, the Swedenburgers, and many other description of Christians, each condemning the opinions of all the others; together with Jews and Deists, who laugh at the whole of them, have their assemblies in your country; and that any one of them, or even of Atheists, may become your President, Vice-President, or a Member of the Congress, without any question being asked him with regard to his religion; while it is equally well known, that no man can be a magistrate, or fill any office of trust in England, unless he first give a *test* of his being a member of the Established Church, the *head* of which Church is the King, who has the absolute appointment of all the Bishops and Deans, and of the greater part of the beneficed Priests. These facts being merely mentioned, I need add nothing further on the subject, except that we have many persons punished in England for publishing works on the subject of religion, while you have no such punishments; and, we have recently seen a man imprisoned for eighteen months and put in the pillory for re-publishing a work here, which had been first published in your country. Which system is best, and which worst, it is not my present object to inquire. My business, upon this occasion, is merely to state facts, which no one can deny, leaving it to the reader to form opinions and draw conclusions.

We will now, then, return to the *taxes*,

which we will take in the aggregate, on both sides of the Atlantic; and then, taking the *population* of each country, we shall see how much *we* pay per head, and how much *you* pay per head. There must be a little confusion here, in our part of the statement, because we have regular poor-rates, by law, in England and Wales, while Scotland has no such law, though there are collections there also for the support of the poor. This, however, cannot be accurately come at. I will, therefore, leave it wholly out, and look upon the poor-rates of England and Wales as raised upon the whole of Great Britain. I will here leave out the shillings, pence, and farthings.

#### Great Britain.

Amount of Taxes paid	}	....L.74,027,583
into the Treasury		
Paid to the Taxgather-	}	..... 3,504,938
ers for collection		
and management		
Amount of Poor Taxes.....		7,896,556

Total L.85,429,077

or

Dollars 341,716,308

But now, in taking the aggregate of *your* taxes, you will see the necessity of my including those which are raised upon the people in the *several States*, for the support of the several *State Governments*, which taxes, of course, form an *addition* to the taxes paid to the general government of the United States.—My materials for ascertaining the amount of these *State taxes* is not quite so perfect as I could wish. Yet I have means to do it to the satisfaction of any one, whose object is that of arriving at truth. In 1805, Benjamin Davies, of Philadelphia, a man of great research and of great accuracy, published, in his "New System of Geography," an account of the revenues and expences of *eight* of the States, correct information from the other States, on this head, not being apparently at his command, or within his reach. This, however, is quite sufficient for our purpose; for no reasonable man will suppose, that these eight States, and those the principal ones, do not furnish a fair criterion whereon to found an estimate of the whole. His account stands as follows, in dollars and cents, or hundredths of a dollar.



STATES.	TAXES.	Tax per head on the Population of the State.	
		Dollars.	Cents.
Vermont.....	10,800 .....		12
Massachusetts	116,000 .....		21
Connecticut...	19,534 .....		7
New York....	Rich in Public Funds, &c.		
New Jersey...	27,000 .....		12
Pennsylvania	397,863 .....		67
Maryland.....	53,000 .....		16
Virginia .....	377,703 .....		43
South Carolina	70,000 .....		35
			8)213
Average.....			26

It appears, from Benjamin Davies's account, that these taxes, or rather these resources, arise, in many cases, from the *interest of stock*, of which the States are the owners, and which make part of the public debt in America. In other cases, they arise from the *sale of lands* belonging to the States. He represents New York State to be owner of 2,000,000 of dollars in stock, and to hold numerous shares in canals, &c. &c. But I shall suppose, that the whole of this money is raised in *taxes* upon the people, and paid out of their pockets. It will then come to this, that each inhabitant of the American Republic pays, in this way, and on this account, 26 cents, or hundredths of a dollar.

You have also, in the great towns, some *poor* to assist. I am quite in the dark upon this head, except as far as observation of some years ago can guide me. This item, therefore, I will take at a guess; and, if I allow that the poor cost *nearly as much as the State Governments*, no one on this side of the water, at any rate, can complain of the estimate. I therefore take the State taxes, including poor taxes, at 50 cents, or half a dollar a head upon the whole of your population. I know that you will say, that this is a monstrous over-rate as to your poor taxes. But I am resolved not to be complained of on the other side. As to *road rates, turnpikes, watching and lighting, and paving and watering, of cities and towns*, I do not notice these in either country, seeing that they are for the immediate benefit of those who pay them.

We will now return to our comparison between the distribution, per head, of our taxes and of yours.

Our year's taxes, including poor taxes, we find amounting to 341,716,308 dol-

lars. Our population in Great Britain, in 1803, was as follows:—

England and Wales...	8,872,980
Scotland .....	1,607,700
Army and Navy.....	469,188
Convicts in the Hulks...	1,410
Total.....	10,951,338
Deduct Army and Navy.....	469,188
	10,482,150
Deduct Convicts on board } the Hulks..... }	1,410
	10,480,740
Deduct Paupers.....	1,800,000
	8,680,740

I make no deduction for prisoners in our jails, whether for crimes or debts; though, as I shall, with sorrow, have to state, by and bye, these are worthy of very serious notice, even in the comparative view which we are now taking. I suppose, that I shall not be contradicted, when I say, that it is impossible, upon any rational ground, to include soldiers, sailors, convicts and paupers amongst the *payers of taxes*; and that, therefore, the deductions, which I have made, will be allowed to be necessary to the correctness of the comparison. But, to get rid of the chance of a cavil being raised; to put it out of the power of any human being to object to my basis, I will distribute our taxes amongst the whole of the population, and will even take that population at its amount previous to the enormous emigration of natives, and *re-emigration* of foreigners, which the peace on the Continent of Europe has produced. Taking the whole of the population of Great Britain, therefore, at 10,951,338, it appears, that, for *each person* old and young, male and female, there were taxes paid, last year, to the amount of 31 dollars and 20 cents (throwing away a fraction); or, in sterling money of England, 7l. 16s. 0d. This, you will observe, is for every soul, whether pauper, soldier, sailor, debtor, convict or other criminal.

On your side I will take the population, of every description, at only 7,500,000, though it is notoriously much more. Your United States taxes, last year, amounted to 14,550,000 dollars, which, distributed amongst your 7,500,000 people, imposes upon each a little less than 2 dollars; and, if we add the taxes of the State Govern-



ments and the largely estimated poor taxes, as above, each person in your Republic paid, last year, including every species of tax, the sum of 2 dollars and 50 cents, or 12s. 6d. of our money; while, as we have just seen, there was paid in Great Britain, for every soul, including soldiers, sailors, paupers, debtors, convicts and criminals in prison, the sum of 31 dollars and 20 cents; or 7l. 16s. 0d. of our money.

Really (for I must break out a little here) Mr. Madison does appear to have boasted *betimes* of the *fortitude* of your people; of the *cheerfulness* with which they bear the *burdens* which the war imposes on them; of their *giving the taxes*, direct and indirect, with *promptness* and *alacrity*! Let him, before he talks in this way, put the people into our state of trial. Let him try the whole population, man, woman and child, pauper, soldier, sailor, debtor, convict and criminal prisoner, with 31 dollars and 20 cents each, instead of 2 paltry dollars and a half; and, *then*, let him talk, if he likes, of their fortitude and patriotism. Our Lords and Gentlemen, in our honourable Houses, talk, indeed, with good grounds of our *unexampled patience* under our *burdens*. This compliment, which Parliaments, in former times, seldom bestowed on our and your forefathers, and which, to acknowledge the truth, they as seldom merited, is fully due to us. But, really, Mr. Madison has begun a little too soon to compliment his fellow citizens on their quality of *bearing burdens*. Their twelve and six penny patience will be thought very little of on this side of the water, where we bear, taking paupers, soldiers, and all, *eleven times as much*, without even a whisper, in the way of complaint. There was, indeed, a few years ago, a man of the name of Carter, in Staffordshire, who published an article, which was understood to contain a censure on his Majesty's Commissioners of Property Tax, in that country; but he was soon led to feel sorrow for his conduct; and, since that, the country has not been disgraced by one single soul, found to follow the evil example, or to be, in the like case, offending. Mr. Madison, says, that his fellow citizens will *proudly* bear their burdens. But, can they bear them so *proudly* as we have borne, and still bear, ours? Has he heard of the bonfires, the ringing of bells, the roasting of sheep and of oxen, the feasts, the balls, and the singing parties, which took place, while the Kings, our friends in

the war, were here last summer? Has he heard of the joy at the sight of the exhibition in the Green Park, and at that of the sham naval fight on the Serpentine River, which formed so apt a representation of the Lake of Champlain and its outlet? Mr. Madison must come hither (and the *Times* newspaper expects to have him here), before he can form the most distant idea of the extent and value of *our patience* and *loyalty*. The sum which one good farm pays here, in the various kinds of taxes, would, if attempted to be collected in America, set a whole township, if not a whole county, of your grudging Republicans in mutiny; and compel the Magistrate to call out the horse soldiers, if there were any at his command. Let us hear no more, therefore, of Mr. Madison's twelve-and-sixpenny patience. Let us hear no more of his boasts of the fortitude of his Republicans, till their *fortitude* makes somewhat of a nearer approach towards ours.

If you will excuse this digression, into which, you will confess, I was so naturally led, not to say, dragged, I will now return to my statement of facts, proceeding next to a view of the *crimes* and *punishments* in this country.

As to our *criminal code*, you, who are a lawyer, know full as much about it as I do, except as far as relates to the *experience* in cases of *libel*. It is merely of the number and description of crimes and punishments that I am now about to speak; and, as in other cases, I shall not deal in vague surmises or general observations; but appeal to authentic reports, and build my statements on the unerring rules of arithmetic. Sir Samuel Romilly, who has, for many years, been labouring to effect a softening of our criminal code, caused, in the year 1811, an account to be laid before Parliament of the crimes and punishments, as far as they came before the *Judges*, for several years preceding. Owing to some cause, with which I am not acquainted, the account came no lower down than the year 1809; and it extended no further than England and Wales, leaving out Scotland, where, as I am told, there are, in fact, but very few crimes and punishments, though the Sheriffs and other Officers of Justice, in that country, are pretty expensive, and are paid out of what is called the Civil List. The summary of the account, of which I have spoken above, is as follows:—



	Persons.
Committed for trial .....	2721
Convicted .....	1573
Sentenced to suffer death .....	372
———— to be transported...	401
———— to be imprisoned, } whipped, fined, &c. &c. }	800
Actually put to death .....	57

Besides these, you will observe, there are all the persons who were tried at the *Quarter Sessions*, in the several counties; that is to say, the sessions held by the *Justices of the Peace*, four times in every year, where as many of the Justices as choose to attend form the Court, having one of their own body for chairman. At these Sessions the offences of a less heinous nature are examined into and punished. But the Justices can sentence to imprisonment, whipping, fine, and, I believe, they can transport. This is the great Court for the trial of persons charged with thefts of an inferior order; and, I should suppose, that the number of criminals brought before these Courts, is twice as great as that of the criminals who are reserved for trial before the Judges, who go into some counties but *once* in the year, and into none, except Middlesex, more than *twice*; whereas the Court of Quarter Sessions is held every three months. However, as I cannot speak here from any authentic document, I shall leave this as a thing whereon for you to exercise your judgment.

As to any *comparison*, on this point, between our country and yours, I am wholly destitute of any authentic document, relative to America, touching crimes and punishments. I can, however, speak as far as my own observation went. I lived in Philadelphia about *eight years*, with every disposition to find fault with every thing that I saw, or heard of, that was amiss. During that time, I never heard of any person, except in one instance, being tried for his or her life; I never heard of a murder, a highway robbery, or of a house being broken open. I never heard of an execution of death on any person, except (the instance above alluded to) of three men, hanged, on the banks of the Delaware, for piracy and murder; these men were foreigners; and such was the horror

of an execution, even in such a case, that the executioner was obliged to be disguised in such a way, that it was impossible that any one should recognise either his person or features, being brought to the spot, in a carriage, under an escort of constables, and taken away, in a similar manner, so as to make it almost impossible for him to become publicly known. Philadelphia, at the time I speak of, contained about 70,000 inhabitants.

It is, as I observed before, impossible to come at any exact statement, on this subject, in the way of *comparison*; but a few facts, notorious on the two sides of the water respectively, will serve to aid you greatly in forming your opinions as to this matter. Here we have laws to guard our *turnip-fields* from robbery, and very necessary they are; for without them there is no man, in any part of the country, who could depend on having the use of his crop even of that coarse and bulky article. To steal corn out of a *field*, after it is cut, is punished with *death* by our laws; and if we had fields of Indian corn, as you have, which is a delightful food for several weeks before it be ripe, I cannot form an idea of the means that would be necessary to preserve it from being carried away. As to *poultry*, no man in England has the smallest expectation of being able ever to taste what he raises, unless he carefully locks it up in the night, and has dogs to guard the approaches to the hen-roost. In America, at within ten or twelve miles of Philadelphia, it is the common practice of the farmers to turn the flocks of turkeys *into the woods*, in the latter end of August, there to remain until towards winter, when they return half fat. A farmer in England would no more think of doing this, than he would think of depositing his purse in any of the public foot-paths across his fields. In order to preserve their fences, the farmers sometimes resort to this expedient: they bore holes into the stoutest of the stakes, which sustain their hedges; put gunpowder into those holes; then drive in a piece of wood very tightly upon the powder; so that the stolen hedge, in place of performing its office of boiling the kettle, dashes it and all around it to pieces. This mode of preserving fences I first heard of at *Alresford*, a town at about twelve miles distance from Botley; and though it certainly does appear, at first sight, a very cruel one, what is a man to do? The thieves are so expert as to set detection at defiance; and



there is nothing but his fences between him and ruin. I have known a man, who assured me, that, by the stealing of his hedge, in the month of March, and letting into his wheat land the flocks from the commons, he lost more than 300*l.* in one night and part of the ensuing day. A few weeks ago I myself had a *fire*, by which I lost a couple of barns and some other buildings. At this fire a numerous crowd was assembled, many of whom came for the purpose of rendering assistance; but one man was detected, while the fire was yet raging, *stealing the lead and iron work of a pump*, fulfilling the old saying, that nothing is too *hot* or too *heavy* for a thief; and it required the utmost of my resolution and exertion, aided by three sons and half a dozen resolute and faithful servants, to preserve, during the night and the next day (which was Sunday), the imperishable and portable part of the property from being carried away. I will just add upon this subject, as an instance of the baseness of our press, that the *Times* newspaper published, upon this occasion, a paragraph, stating, that I had most *ungratefully* driven away "the *honest rustics*," who had *kindly* come to my assistance. It is very true, that I did drive the "*honest rustics*" away; but I succeeded in putting a stop to their thefts, which would, I verily believe, have been nearly as injurious as the fire. Since the fire happened upon my premises, a gentleman, who had a similar accident some years ago, has assured me, that almost every article of *iron* was stolen from his premises. It is notorious, that, in London, the thieving forms a very considerable part of every such calamity. But the thing which, better than any other, bespeaks the nature of our situation, in this respect, is the exhibition of notices on the top of garden walls and of other fences, menacing those who enter with the danger of death from *man-traps* and *spring-guns*. Peter Pindar has immortalised these by introducing them into a poem, where he ludicrously represents the King as intent upon "catching his living subjects by the legs." But he must have well known, that, without them, neither King nor subject could possess the produce of a garden. Sometimes the *traps themselves* are hoisted up upon a sort of gibbet, in the day time, in order to inspire greater terror; and, it is only a few months ago, that we had an account of a man being actually killed by a *spring-gun*, in a nocturnal expedition in

a garden at Mitcham. Besides these we are infested by gangs of itinerant thieves, called *gypsies*. The life of these people very much resembles that of the savages, whom I have seen, on the borders of the *River St. John*, in New Brunswick; except that the latter gain their food by hunting and fishing, and the former by theft. The gypsies have no settled home; no house, or hut, or place of dwelling. They have asses, which carry themselves, their children, their kettle, and their means of erecting tents, and which tents are precisely like those of the North American savages. The nights they employ in thieving. Sheep, pigs, poultry, corn, roots, fruit: nothing comes amiss to them.—What they steal in one place, they spend in another place; and thus they proceed all over the country. They commit acts of murder and theft and arson innumerable. The members of this moving community are frequently hanged, or transported; but still the troops of vagabonds exist; and, as far as I am able to judge, are as numerous as they were when I was a boy. But still the great evil, in this view of the subject, is the want of honesty in the labouring class, to whatsoever cause that evil is to be ascribed. Those writers on rural affairs, who have urged the employing of *threshing machines for corn*, have counted, amongst the greatest of their advantages, that they protected the farmer against the *thefts of the thresher*. Various are the ways, in which corn is stolen by those who thresh it; but I will content myself with one, the information with regard to which I derive from a very respectable neighbour. He perceived that his thresher brought a large *wooden bottle* with him to work every day. Being winter time, he could not conceive what should make the man so very thirsty. He watched him. Never saw him drink. At last he accosted him in his way home, and, after some altercation, insisted upon examining the bottle, which he found to be full of wheat. Thus was this man taking away three gallons of wheat every week, which, at that time, was not worth less than six shillings. It was this, I believe, and this alone, which made my neighbour resolve to use a threshing machine.

Such is by no means an overcharged view of *our* situation in this respect. Of the causes which have led to it I shall not speak; indeed, I do not know that I am competent. That it is not owing to a



want of penal laws is very certain. I am unable to say, whether your country, at this time, be better or worse situated as to this matter. At any rate, I shall enable you to make the comparison; and as such comparison, if clearly and candidly made, might be of great use to the people of both countries, I think it is not too much for me to hope, that you, in the public manner of which I am giving you an example, will communicate that comparison to me. But, if you can do it, let us have *authentic documents*. It would be perfectly easy to obtain a year's account of all the commitments, convictions, and sentences, in your Republic. I should not fear executing such a task with an expense of 20 dollars; and, as the execution of it would give to the world a piece of the most interesting and most valuable information, I will not fear, that you, who have all the means in your hands, will decline to undertake it. If you do undertake it, I know that you will execute it with a strict adherence to *truth*; and, if so executed, it must be productive of great good. Both countries must profit from it, especially if peace should, happily, be restored between them.

As to the *mode of living* in this country, compared to the mode of living in your Republic, I cannot, in this letter, enter into the inquiry, which would take up more room than I have at present, and also much more time. It is, however, a most interesting subject; because it speaks, at once, to the great object for which civil society was framed; namely, the *happiness of the people*. Even now, however, I cannot refrain from giving you a notion of the manner in which our *labourers* live. I am, strange as it may seem, enabled to appeal to *Parliamentary authority* here also. There is now before me a Report of a Committee of the House of Commons, on the subject of the Corn Laws. This Committee report the evidence of certain persons examined by them; and, amongst the rest, of a great landholder, in Wiltshire, named Bennett, who, upon being asked how much a labourer and his family ought to have to live upon, answered: "We calculate, that every person, in a labourer's family, should have *per week*, the price of a gallon loaf, and *threepence* over for *feeding and clothing*, exclusive of house-rent, sickness, and casual expenses." This Report was ordered, by the House of Commons, to be printed, on the 25th of July last.

Now, "a gallon loaf" weighs, according to law, 8lb. 10oz. avoirdupois weight. This is the allotment, for seven days, for one person; but, then, as you will perceive, Mr. Bennett and his neighbours allow threepence, or five cents, a week more, or, suppose, a cent per day more, for *feeding and clothing*. The particulars of the *feeding and clothing* that can be had for threepence per week, or 13 shillings a year, it would, perhaps, be difficult to ascertain, without immediate application to Mr. Bennett; and, as that is out of my power, I must leave these particulars to be come at by your powers of divination; adding, however, that, as far as my observation has reached, Mr. Bennett's account appears to have been tolerably correct.

I am, with sincere esteem,

Your Friend,

WM. COBBETT.

AMERICAN WAR.—In the Report of the Debate in Parliament, on the day of the opening of the Session, the following passage is to be found in the speech of Lord Liverpool.—"He could assure the Noble Baron that there had appeared in *American publications* a much ampler justification of those measures on our part than he had seen in this country, that in many places a strong disposition had been shewn by the American people to put themselves under our protection, and that their treatment of our officers led to any conclusion, rather than to the belief that they entertain any animosity against this country, or that they were not fully persuaded that the war was a war of unprovoked aggression on the part of their own Government."—This is the rock, on which, in my opinion, we shall split. As to the *publications* in America, his Lordship has not a view, I am persuaded, of both sides. Who, that reads only the *Morning Chronicle*, would not suppose that the present Ministry are dreadfully unpopular; and that they were upon the point of being turned out! Well, then, if his Lordship considers what a sort of a press they have in the Republic; how perfectly free that press is; how completely unrestrained; how wholly fearless men are in the use of their tongues and pens. If he observes that, after the capture of Washington, some of the newspaper writers in America expressed, in so many words, *their sorrow that the President had not been made prisoner*. If he considers this, he will be very careful to



see *both sides*, before he grounds any opinion of the feelings of the American people, on what he sees in their newspapers.—His Lordship is made to say, “that, in many places, a strong disposition has been shewn by the American people to *put themselves under our protection*,” which must mean, *to become colonists of England*. This opinion is, in part, at least, we see, grounded on *their kind treatment of our officers*!—I am sorry that such a thing was published. No, my Lord; no; their kind treatment of our officers is no sign at all that they are disaffected towards their own Government, or, that they think it in the wrong. The officers taken in the *Juwa*, by Captain Bainbridge, were treated by him in the most kind and generous manner. Captain Barclay, who was defeated and captured on the Lakes by Capt. Perry, spoke in the highest terms of the generosity of his conqueror; and, I believe, that there never was an instance of the Americans treating a prisoner of war unkindly. It will be remembered, that they spared the life of *Sir Charles Asgyl*, when, according to the laws of war, they would have been justified in taking it away. It was said, that they did this at the intercession of the Queen of France, who had been applied to by his mother. But they *did* spare his life, though the whole American people were decided as to the clear *justice* of taking it away. The Americans inherit *all* the horror of bloodshed entertained by us; they are equally humane, kind, and generous, and especially towards a fallen enemy; and, in point of *hospitality*, the ease and plenty amidst which they live naturally make them our superiors. I dare say that our captive officers will say, on their release, that they never were so well treated in their lives; and if they remain long in that sort of captivity, they will, I dare say, as so many of our officers did, during the last war, voluntarily enter into a captivity of another description. The American women seldom suffer a disengaged heart to escape with freedom. But, from all this we ought not to argue, that the people are disaffected towards their own Government; or, that they disapprove of its declaring war for the protection of American seamen.—Besides, *who* and *what* is this Government, of which Lord Liverpool is said to have spoken? It was not Mr. Madison who declared war. It was the *two Houses of Congress*. It was the *real*

*representatives of the whole people*, who had very recently chosen those representatives, who, of course, spoke the people's voice. If the *people* had disapproved of the war, the war would never have taken place.—It is of the utmost importance that our Ministers should be made well acquainted with the real disposition of the American people. Our agents and friends in that country send over only those newspapers, which contain matter *pleasing to us*. If, by chance, newspapers of another sort come hither, our newspapers suppress their contents.—We should hear *both sides*, in order to enable us to form any thing like a sound judgment.—If Lord Liverpool were to see some of the papers from New York, he would change his opinion. He would see that the affair of Washington, so far from indisposing the people towards their Government, had filled them with indignation against us, and had called forth incredible *voluntary exertions*. He would see, that a *committee of defence* had been established; that voluntary offerings of money and of personal services had poured in from all ranks and degrees. He would see the several trades sending forth their members alternately. He would see the merchant, the mechanic, the shop-keeper, the lawyer, the student, the school-boy, the labourer, all uniting to go and work *with their own hands* in the erection of fortifications, the making of fascines, the dragging of cannon, and the doing of every other thing tending to enable their Government to resist us; while the farmers were rivaling each other in offers of their horses, and of accommodations and provisions for the persons so employed. In August there were 5,000 men, all volunteers, employed *daily* in preparations for defence. The divers meetings and resolutions cannot here be given account of in detail; but it is impossible to look at these papers, without being convinced that the spirit of resistance is universal; and that the idea of the people of America being “disposed to put themselves *under our protection*,” is extremely erroneous. The spectacle is, too, very interesting, in another view of the matter. It shews, in the most lively colours, what men are of themselves, and without commanders, able and willing to do in defence of their country.—The same spectacle is exhibited at Philadelphia. Offers of service and of money from all descriptions of men; more than twenty thousand men, horse and foot,



always ready to march to meet the enemy; fortifications erecting on the Delaware; picquets established down the side of that river, and videttes stationed all the way along the coast to the Chesapeake. I cannot forbear inserting a part of a publication by the *Committee of Defence* of New York, of the 30th of August, in these words:—"The Committee acknowledge the receipt of 120 waggon loads of fascines, averaging 25 bundles each load, presented by the township of Jamaica, and brought to Fort Green by its citizens, headed by the Rev. Mr. Schoonmaker;—the Principal of the Academy at Jamaica, Mr. Egenbrot, and his pupils, aided in cutting the fascines."—This is a specimen of what was going on. Does this shew "a strong disposition to put themselves under our protection?" The following General Orders, published at Philadelphia, will shew how things were, at the same time, going on there:—

"Philadelphia, Aug. 29.

"FOURTH MILITARY DISTRICT.

"Head-Quarters, Philadelphia, Aug. 27, 1814.

"GENERAL ORDERS.

"Captain Ross, with thirty men of his troop of cavalry, are called into service, to act as videttes, between this city, the Delaware, and the Chesapeake.—The signal for alarm will be six guns, fired in quick succession, at Fort Mifflin, at the Navy Yard, and at the Arsenal, and by the drums of the city and liberties beating 'to arms.'—And immediately thereupon all the militia will parade equipped completely for the field, right upon Chestnut-street, extending southwardly on Broad-street.—The officers of the topographical department and corps of engineers, will report themselves on Monday next to General Jonathan Williams, who is pleased to undertake the superintendence of the erection of works in and near this city for its defence.

"By order of General Bloomfield,

"WILLIAM DUANE, Adj. Gen.

"The Select and Common Councils, on Saturday evening last, appropriated 300,000 dollars, and the Northern Liberties and Southward 100,000 dollars each, to be placed at the disposal of the Committee of Defence."

This was no contemptible sum for one city. It was 100,000% of our money. This William Duane, whom we here see an Adjutant-General, was the proprietor of a newspaper, when I lived in Philadelphia. He had been the same in the *East Indies*, where, as he stated, his office had been destroyed, his types flung out into the street, himself lodged in the guard-house, and afterwards sent out of the country. He carried his resentments along with him to America, where, for about twenty years, by dint of talent and courage, he has possessed very considerable influence on the public mind, I, while in America, was his great opponent. We said very bitter

things of each other, and some things which, on both sides, were very false. In the bitterness of party rage, he accused me of being *in the pay of the English Minister*, and I accused him of being a *run-away and traitor*. Whether he has ever done me the justice to acknowledge that his accusations were unjust, I know not; but I have done him that justice long ago; and lest, what I then said may have been forgotten, I will now repeat it.—I had, in Philadelphia, a friend, and hope I still have, name Richard North, an Englishman, settled there for many years; a most worthy, honest, kind and true man; and distinguished, above all the men I ever knew, by his devotion to England. This beloved friend of mine was in England in 1806; and having some business in Ireland, he went to *Clonmel*, the birth place of Mr. Duane, in the full expectation, and, perhaps, in the hope, of finding proof of the truth of these accusations of ours against this distinguished enemy of the English Government. But my friend North, though the most prejudiced, perhaps, of all Mr. Duane's enemies, had more honesty and honour than prejudice; and he told me, that not only was Mr. Duane no culprit, or run-away, but that *he had always been greatly esteemed, and that his parents and relations were very respectable people.*—Mr. North, who, I hope, is still living, and whose friendship I shall, to my last breath, regard as one of my most valuable possessions; he, who never was guilty, knowingly, of injustice towards any human being, and who never withheld any act of justice, which was within his power, would, I am sure, if appealed to, confirm the truth of what I now assert; and I am also sure, that no reader, of a just mind, will think that this digression from my subject was uncalled for.—Such, then, are the men, who, even in Philadelphia, are at the head of military affairs. This, of itself, is a proof of the disposition of the people there, at any rate. But if Lord Liverpool could look into these newspapers, he would see, that regiment after regiment of militia and volunteers are marching from the interior to the defence of cities and towns on the coast. He would see, that the *thought* even of yielding to England is entertained by nobody, except by a few of those men, called *Federalists*, whose hatred to the Republicans, by whom they have been humbled, overpowers, for the moment, their sober senses. The approach of real danger



will change the tone even of these. As a specimen of the sentiments of the people of the State of Kentucky, I present the Ministry with the following resolutions, passed in that State, on the 4th of July last:

*The following are the preamble and resolutions, which were adopted at the Great Crossing, Kentucky, on the 4th of July.*

"The glorious revolution had scarcely ended, when the King of England and his corrupt ministry renewed their system of deep-rooted enmity against the honour, peace and happiness of the American people. As our attachment to peace was developed, British outrage increased; our ships in every sea were plundered; our waters crimsoned, and our national flag stained with the blood of our citizens; our native and naturalized citizen seamen impressed, insulted by a mock trial, and doomed to slavery; spies and incendiaries commissioned and sent among us for the purpose of separating the union by corruption; the uncultivated and blood-thirsty savage of the forest, armed with deadly weapons and let loose upon our defenceless citizens.—Thus outraging and violating every species of national honour, and pursuing a course, which must, if unresisted, have ended in the total destruction of American independence—therefore,

*Resolved*, That in this state of things no honourable course was left but an appeal to arms, an act that we have never hesitated for a moment to believe but was just; and can never be regretted by the patriots and friends to the rights and interests of our country.

*Resolved*, That the storms of war, the desolations of countries, the demolition of cities, the conflagration of houses, the loss of friends, however to be regretted, cannot lessen our attachment to our rights, nor deter us from a vigorous prosecution and defence of them.

*Resolved*, That we consider ourselves bound by our duty to posterity, and our obligations to a divine providence, to resist with a determined spirit, and by every hazard, the daring and unprovoked outrages of Great Britain, against our sovereignty and independence.

*Resolved*, That the Kentuckians have given the best evidence of their zeal for the cause of their country, by rallying around the standard thereof; and we hesitate not to say, that the people of this state will heartily co-operate in any measure which may be adopted by our government, to prosecute the present war with the utmost vigour.

*Resolved*, That in reviewing the events of the war, so far from seeing a cause which should induce us to wish for peace, upon securing the objects for which the war was declared, events have transpired to convince the mind, that other objects should be secured, before the contest is ended, to

wit—the possession of the Canadas, as a necessary basis of a lasting peace.

*Resolved*, That this measure is necessary and indispensable to the security of the frontiers of the United States, and that no proposition should again be made from the United States to end the war, until we have possession of the Canadas, and the British possessions in North America.

*Resolved*, That the nation that will submit to foreign aggression is unworthy the liberty of freemen, and that the President and Congress should trust to the patriotism of the people, and call for men and money sufficient for the objects to be accomplished.

*Resolved*, That at this eventful crisis, it is recommended to the good people of the Union, to be upon the watchtower of their duty—guard against internal traitors, as well as external enemies, that they may not be surprised by the combined enemies of civil and religious rights."

This, as the reader will perceive, was published in July last, long after that fall of Napoleon, which was expected to produce such an humble tone in America. You see they anticipated the burning of cities; but this had no weight as to their views of the war.—But, perhaps, the fact, which, above all others, is worthy of our attention, is, the result of the late election in the city of New York, where the choice has fallen upon men decidedly in favour of Mr. Madison; and, of course, in favour of the war. This is proof unquestionable of the popularity of the war.—I shall now close this article, with a request, that the English reader will read attentively the Report of the Secretary of the *American Navy*, which he will find below. It is a document that none but a fool will look at without serious reflections, and that none but a knave will affect to treat with contempt.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN NAVY.

To the Naval Committee of the Senate of the United States.

Navy Department, Feb. 22, 1814.

SIR—I have the honour to submit the following, in answer to your letter of the 20th December last.—Three ships of 74 guns each, and of the largest class, are now building, of prime materials, and in the most substantial and durable manner, viz. one at Portsmouth, N. H. one at Charlestown, Mass, and one at Philadelphia. The two former, it is expected, will be launched in the month of July, and the latter in the month of December next.—Three ships of 44 guns each, of the largest class, are also building, of durable



materials, in the best manner, viz. one at Philadelphia, one at Baltimore, and one at the navy yard in this city. The two former, it is expected, will be launched by the middle of April, and the latter in all the month of July next.—The six sloops of war, authorised by law, have all been built, in the most substantial manner, and of good materials. Two of which are ready for sea; three more have nearly completed their crews, and will, probably, be ready for sea in ten or twelve days, and the sixth is now equipping at the navy yard in this city.—Six barges have been purchased at Philadelphia; also, four at Baltimore, and one at Norfolk.—Eight have been built at Baltimore; ten are nearly completed on the eastern shore of Maryland; four have been built, and one is now building at the navy yard in this city; five are building at Charleston, S. C.; six at St. Mary's, Georgia; and preparatory measures are now in operation to increase the force in North Carolina, and at New Orleans, in vessels of this description, as fast as men can be procured to man them.—Previous to the year 1813, it appears, that no timber had been procured under the act of March 30, 1812; but early in the year 1813, timber to the amount of 23,000 dollars was purchased at Baltimore, under the act of March 30th, 1812, "suitable for rebuilding the frigates Philadelphia, General Greene, New York and Boston;" but as there is no appropriation or authority to rebuild those frigates, and as the Philadelphia is not in existence, and the General Greene, New York and Boston are rotten, worthless hulks, that would cost much more, in proportion to their value, to rebuild them than to build new frigates, of a better class, and vastly superior construction, a part of that timber has been applied to the building of the 44 and the sloops of war at Baltimore, and the 74 and 44 at Philadelphia. Contracts for and purchases of timber to a very considerable amount, have been made for naval purposes during the year 1813; but which have not been charged to the particular appropriation of the 30th of March, 1812, though applied to the same purposes as timber chargeable to that appropriation would have been, viz: in building the three 74's, at Portsmouth, Charlestown, and Philadelphia, the 44 gun ship at the latter place, and the 44 and sloop of war at the navy yard in this city; also, in the repairs of the ships of the navy, and in preparing several sets of spare

masts, spars, tops, &c. ready for the ships which may return damaged; and the residue is applicable to similar purposes.—These have been charged, either under the head of repairs, or to the appropriation for building 74s and frigates; which appropriations, it is conceived, are properly chargeable with timber purchased for those purposes. Six cargoes, amounting to twenty-six hundred tons, of Georgia yellow pine timber, which had been cut for the use of the British navy, but entered the eastern ports of the United States, on account of the war, have been purchased on favourable terms; also, a prize cargo of northern timber. These are properly chargeable to the annual appropriation for the purchase of timber. A contract was made in August last for the delivery at Norfolk and this place, of a quantity of yellow pine plank, thick stuff, beams, and mast pieces, sufficient for two ships of 74 guns each, and two 44 gun frigates. The timber under this contract is now delivering.—Contracts for timber, yet to be delivered, have been made at the eastern stations, the particulars of which are not yet in the department. A recent contract has been made at Philadelphia for white oak plank, thick stuff, beams, and knees; and for yellow pine plank, and beams, sufficient for a 74 and a 44 gun ship; and for fifty sticks of yellow pine for masts and spars. These are chargeable upon the appropriation of the 30th of March, 1812.—No contracts for live oak timber have yet been made, as the transportation is impracticable under existing circumstances; and if collected in considerable quantities at landings accessible to vessels fit for transportation, they would be equally so to the enemy, and the timber, when collected, would be liable to destruction. As live oak is exclusively applied to the frame of timbers, which constitute the form and mould of the ship, it is necessary that the timber should be cut and shaped, not only to the particular curve for which each piece is designated, but to its true oblique dimensions; otherwise great waste in the conversion, and expence in transportation, will ensue; for this purpose it is necessary that draughts or designs of the contemplated ships should be determined, proper moulds made by which to cut and shape the timber, and mechanics employed to superintend the execution of the contracts. Hence, contracts for timber of this description cannot be made and executed with the same facility and certainty as for



straight rectangular timber. It is, therefore, considered that a state of peace will be much more favourable to the collection of a stock of timber of this description than that of war, in which it can neither be transported to the dock-yards nor deposited in safety at the seacoast landings. Nevertheless it is contemplated to make the necessary arrangements for such supplies of suitable live oak timber as may be had in places of safety. On this subject it is very satisfactory to learn, that our resources in timber of this kind are greatly extended, in the abundance which may be procured from the shores of the bays and waters near the mouth of the Mississippi. This species of timber requires very little seasoning; six months' docking will render it perfectly fit for use. No further steps have been taken in relation to the dock-yards, than a general inquiry and proper deliberation, in order to determine upon the best scite in a central situation. The result has decided in favour of the right bank of the Hudson, above the highlands. The motives to this decision were, from considering the contemplated dock-yard as the nucleus, around which a great naval establishment may be formed, comprising wet and dry docks, forges, foundries, boring, rolling, saw and block mills, blast and smelting furnaces, an armoury, hydraulic engines, rope works, manufactories of sail duck, and workshops of all kinds, which will require a copious head of water, readily commanded in this vicinity. Here also will be the main arsenal and depot of timber, and materials of all kinds, and the principal dock-yard for constructing and repairing ships of war. Such an establishment in any of our sea-ports, accessible to ships of the line, would form so great a temptation to a powerful enemy as to render destruction certain, unless protected by forts and garrisons of the most formidable and expensive nature.—The natural defences at the pass of the highlands, are such as to remove all doubt on this subject, and supersede the necessity of a large protecting force.—The Hudson is a deep, bold, noble stream, of easy and safe navigation. The surrounding country produces abundance of iron, and large quantities of hemp; and the banks of the Hudson furnish a variety of timber fit for naval purposes. The communication with the northern and western lakes, is more direct and favourable to the distribution of naval and military stores than any other

situation that can be selected. The only objection of importance that I have heard suggested, is that the Hudson at this point is closed by the ice a fortnight sooner, and opens a fortnight later, than at New York; but this objection is greatly overbalanced by the extraordinary advantages of the situation.—In order to select the most suitable situation, a careful examination and survey, under the direction of some of our most experienced officers, aided by a skilful engineer, appears to be indispensable, an opportunity for which has been prevented by the active operations of the war, and consequent occupation of the officers best qualified for this service.—The number of seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, authorised by law, is indefinite and discretionary with the President, as will appear by the following reference.

The Act of Congress of the 21st of April, 1806, vol 8, page 106; limits the officers, seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, to 13 captains, 9 masters commandant, 72 lieutenants, 150 midshipmen, and 925 seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys. There is no correct data in the department, by which to ascertain the actual number of seamen, ordinary seamen, and boys, employed at any one period. The longest period of enlistment being for two years, and in many cases for the flotilla service, for a shorter period; the number is constantly fluctuating, and consequently cannot be correctly ascertained; but it is believed, from a general view of the subject by the accountant and myself, that the number employed during the year 1813, has considerably exceeded the estimate for that year. There is not at this time, in the department, sufficient data upon which to estimate the number of gun-boats actually fit for service; some have undergone partial repairs, while others have deteriorated.—The following will shew the number on each station, and their presumed condition, viz.

Gun-boats.	
Portsmouth, N. H. in service.....	6
Newburyport do.....	2
Boston do.....	2
Rhode Island do.....	9
New London do.....	2
New York do.....	31
In ordinary, fit for service.....	7
	—39
Delaware Bay, in service.....	7
In ordinary, fit for service.....	12
	—19
Baltimore in service.....	1
Potomac do.....	3
Norfolk, in service, and ready for service, but very lightly manned—recruiting as men offer.....	29
North Carolina, in service.....	6
South Carolina do.....	3
Georgia do.....	5
New Orleans do.....	6

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When it is considered that six large sloops of war have been built, equipped and manned, in our seaports, and three sloops of war and one ship of 26 guns on the Lakes, within the preceding eight months; that three 71's and three 44's will be added this year, but which are yet to be manned, and that provision still exists for building



one 74 and three 44's as soon as suitable materials can be had; it appears to me that any further provision at present for the increase of our naval force would not add to its efficiency, and therefore is not necessary; except such as I have suggested in my letter to the Chairman of the Naval Committee of the House of Representatives, a copy of which I have the honour to enclose; and even of that description, the number ought to be *very moderate*, when the contemplated increase of our force on the Lakes, and the demand for experienced officers and seamen, which the very rapid augmentation of our force has created, are taken into view. The flotilla service, moreover, is still very deficient in men. We may readily and rapidly add any reasonable number of vessels to our force, but their armament and many important parts of their equipment of every description will be to fabricate. The cannon foundries are few in number, and none of any note north of the waters of the Chesapeake. These have been, are now, and will be fully engaged during the present year, in fabricating the ordnance required for the force already authorized. The private armed vessels cannot at this time procure their armament of a proper kind on any terms.—With the rapid increase of our naval force, the promotion of young officers has been necessarily very rapid; and those whose experience and talents have exalted our flag are comparatively few in number. Therefore, however desirable it may be to give the senior lieutenants separate commands in which they would be useful to their country, and acquire honour to themselves, it will leave our 74's and frigates and squadrons on the Lakes without officers of sufficient experience. This has been a subject of serious solicitude with some of our commanders; and the tenacious policy of our naval system precludes the admission of talent and experience from any other source than lineal promotion. It is true sailing masters have been promoted to Lieutenants, under special circumstances; and I perceive no good reason why this experienced and valuable class of officers should not be as regularly entitled to promotion as midshipmen.—With these views the honourable Committee will be enabled to appreciate the arguments which I have deemed it proper to offer for their consideration.—I also beg leave to suggest the propriety of augmenting the marine corps from the present establishment 1,869, to 2,652, and to increase the number of commissioned officers in the same proportion as in the infantry of the army.—It is not necessary to recal the recollection of the honourable Committee to the gallant part this distinguished corps has acted in all the noble victories which have been achieved; nor to its character for discipline, valour, and patient endurance of the most severe service on the Lakes, in which it has suffered excessively; suffice it to say, that it is not surpassed by any body of men in the service of the United States, though seen only in the back ground of the picture, and without the ordinary inducements to noble actions—a reasonable prospect of promotion, with a sprig of the laurel which it may help to gather. The augmentation which I recommend, will be actually necessary for the force now authorized, as will be illustrated by the estimate which accompanies this. This corps is, moreover, exceedingly useful at our several naval stations, and from its amphibious character calculated to render important services in every situation. We have a right, Sir, to anticipate during the ensuing summer the most urgent occasion for the vigorous employment of the flotilla for the defence of the waters of the United States; and it has become a very interesting

question, how that force is to be commanded with the best effect. That service is, at best, unpopular with the regular officers of the navy, and the services of those officers who are qualified for separate command are required to meet the increased demand for the regular naval force, particularly on the Lakes, which is very pressing. Those officers who are deficient in experience, are justly averse to the flotilla service: because they can acquire but very little useful professional knowledge; and, indeed, it is a service in which those, who are to form the officers for the ships of war, ought not to be engaged.—There are other intrinsic difficulties in this service which are unknown on board our ships of war. The temptations to insubordination and vice are much greater in this scattered and amphibious kind of force; and the rigours of naval discipline, unless tempered with judgment and great moderation, discourage the recruiting for this service. Bay and river craft men, seamen, ordinary seamen who have families, riggers and naval mechanics out of employ, will engage in the service under a local commander of capacity and influence, when they will not engage for the regular naval service.—As rank in our naval service can only be attained by regular gradation, commanders of talents, local knowledge, influence and distinguished courage, cannot be commissioned for this service under the present regulations. The necessity of the case, from the reasons which I have assigned, has induced the employment of a few acting officers with command, but without rank, in two of the most important situations, viz. New York harbour and the Chesapeake bay. These appointments appear to have given great confidence in these districts, and the success in recruiting for the service on these stations, considering the unequal competition of the military and private service, has been favourable. I would, therefore, take the liberty of suggesting the utility of providing by law for the appointment of four captains, with the same relative rank and authority in the flotilla service, and the same pay and emoluments, as captains in the navy; and twelve lieutenants with the same relative rank and authority in the flotilla service, and the same pay and emoluments, as lieutenants in the navy; but limited to the temporary employment of the flotilla without rank in the navy, other than in the flotilla in which they may serve, and subject only to the orders of the President of the United States; in all other respects to be governed by the rules and regulations provided for the government of the navy. There is an object of great importance, to which I could have wished to draw your attention. I mean the re-organization of the navy department; of the necessity of which no one can be more sensible than myself; but really my faculties have been so closely engaged with the multifarious objects and the current and incessant labours of the department, during a period of the most active and important operations, that I have had no leisure to deliberate upon, and digest a system satisfactory to myself, or such as I can present to you at this time. And, as it is better to labour with known evils than to hazard a premature and inadequate system, I have thought it best to postpone the subject for the present, respectfully submitting, however, to the wisdom of Congress to revise the system if it shall deem it now necessary.

I have the honour to be, &c. W. JONES.

Hon. John Gaillard, Chairman  
of the Naval Committee of the Senate.